

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 MMO-01 SSM-03 SAA-01 CIAE-00
DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00
AID-05 A-01 OPR-02 OC-06 CCO-00 EUR-12 SCS-06
CA-01 SY-05 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 MCT-02
USSS-00 HA-05 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 PPT-01 /121 W
-----017892 291336Z /46

O R 291130Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8969
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, LE, US, SOPN
SUBJ: FURTHER PRESS REACTION TO US STAFF REDUCTION AND
TRAVEL ADVISORY

REF: BEIRUT 4294

1. THE BEIRUT PRESS HAS CONTINUED TO REACT NEGATIVELY TO
JULY 27 DECISION TO SEND OUT US DEPENDENTS, DRAW DOWN EMBASSY
STAFF AND ADVISE AMERICANS WITHOUT PRESSING BUSINESS TO LEAVE.

2. THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IKE PORTRAYED THE US AMBASSADOR
ON HORSEBACK AND GARBED AS PAUL REVERE, RIDING AND CALLING,
"THE ROCKETS ARE COMING* THE ROCKETS ARE COMING*" THE PAPER'S
BANNER HEADLINE WAS "NO NEED TO PANIC." (JUXTAPOSED WAS
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SEPARATE ITEM ON LAST NIGHT'S ACTIVITY, "HEAVY GUN BATTLES
RESUME.") IKE'S EDITORIAL ACCUSED THE US GOVERNMENT OF
"TERRORIZING" THE LEBANESE AND CALLED FOR "AN EXPLANATION OF
THE DANGERS WHICH THE LEBANESE PEOPLE, WHO ARE NO LESS HUMAN
THAN THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, WOULD WANT TO PROTECT THEMSELVES
AGAINST." IKE ALSO CALLED FOR "AN EXPLANATION OF WHAT (THE
US) IS DOING TO HELP LEBANON AVOID THOSE DANGERS." ONCE

PAST THE HEADLINES AND THE EDITORIAL, IKE'S REPORTAGE WAS MORE BALANCED AND INCLUDED A QUOTE FROM AN OFFICIAL OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, WHO REFUSED TO BE IDENTIFIED, THAT "THE LEBANESE ARE CRAZY. THEY HAVE GIVEN THIS THING SO MUCH IMPORTANCE JUST BECAUSE IT IS AN AMERICAN DECISION." THE OFFICIAL ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID THAT AMBASSADOR PARKER HAD MADE THE DECISION BECAUSE HE FEARED THERE "COULD BE MORE CLASHES."

3. AN NAHAR, THE MOST RESPECTED OF THE ARAB LANGUAGE DAILIES, GAVE STRAIGHT COVERAGE TO OUR ACTION AND TO THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT ON IT. AN NAHAR NOTED THAT THE DECISION HAD WORRIED AUTHORITIES "AS MUCH AS THE CITIZENS, IF NOT MORE."

4. LEFTIST AS SAFIR, THE ARABIC DAILY WHICH IS PROBABLY SECOND TO AN NAHAR IN INFLUENCE, CALLED THE DECISION "REGRETTABLE" AND A "GRAVE INDICATOR" OF THINGS TO COME. SAFIR DISTORTED THE QUESTION AND ANSWER EXCHANGE WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S SPOKESMAN AND SAID THAT THE SPOKESMAN HAD LINKED THE EMBASSY'S DECISION TO ISRAELI ARMS DELIVERIES TO RIGHTIST MILITIAS.

5. RIGHT-WING AL BAYRAQ COMPLAINED THAT THE EMBASSY'S ACTION HAD "CREATED AN ATMOSPHERE OF FEAR AMONG LEBANESE CITIZENS." THE PAPER THEN CALLED ON OFFICIALS TO TAKE THE EMBASSY'S MOVE INTO "SERIOUS CONSIDERATION" AND TO MOVE QUICKLY TO "FACE THE COMING PHASE."
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6. AL LIWA, A LEFTIST AND GENERALLY PRO-PLO SHEET, CALLED THE US AND CANADIAN DECISIONS TO REDUCE STAFF AND ISSUE WARNINGS TO THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES "A SHOCK," ESPECIALLY IN "A RELATIVELY CALM PERIOD." PRO-SOVIET ASH SHA'B NOTED THAT THE DECISION CAME ONLY A WEEK AFTER WE HAD DENIED RUMORS THAT THE MISSION HAD WARNED ALL AMERICANS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY BY JULY 24. SHA'B SAID THAT THE US WAS ENGAGED IN A "PSYCHOLOGICAL CAMPAIGN" OF CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED RUMORS AND STATEMENTS TO AID THE RIGHTIST MILITIAS. SHA'B SUGGESTED THAT THE US AMBASSADOR CUT DOWN ON CALLS TO LEBANESE OFFICIALS AND CONSIDER HIMSELF ONE OF THE CITIZENS WITHOUT PRESSING BUSINESS WHO SHOULD LEAVE THE COUNTRY.

7. PRO-SYRIAN ASH SHARQ SAID THAT "COORDINATION" OF THE UNITED STATES, ISRAEL AND RIGHTIST MILITIAS WAS LEADING TOWARDS "EXPLODING THE SITUATION AND PARTITIONING THE COUNTRY."

8. THE FRENCH LANGUAGE PRESS WAS EQUALLY NEGATIVE. L'ORIENT-LE JOUR HEADLINED "ANTI-AMERICAN

OUTCRY AND SERIOUS CONCERN IN BEIRUT." THE PHALANGE PARTY'S FRENCH LANGUAGE PAPER, LE REVEIL, RAN A CARTOON DEPICTING UNCLE SAM RUNNING, FRIGHTENED, AWAY FROM LEBANON WHILE PAPER "GUARANTEES" SCATTERED IN THE WIND AND A LARGE AND POWERFUL-LOOKING CASTRO RUSHED ONTO THE SCENE.

9. THE DAILIES GAVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO STATEMENTS AGAINST OUR DECISION BY PHALANGE LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL AND FORMER PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKER ADEL OSSEIRAN. GEMAYEL CALLED OUR MOVE "PART OF A PSYCHOLOGICAL WAR BEING WAGED AGAINST THE LEBANESE PEOPLE." HE ALSO ASKED IF IT WAS "NECESSARY FOR THE AMERICAN EMBASSY TO MAKE THIS ANNOUNCEMENT WHEN THEY KNOW THE AMOUNT OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DAMAGE IT WILL CAUSE FOR LEBANON AND ITS PEOPLE." OSSEIRAN SAID THE MOVE WAS "A CLEAR INDICATION" THAT THE US INTENDS TO ALLOW ISRAEL TO OCCUPY SOUTH LEBANON AND THAT THE US WANTS PARTITION OF THE COUNTRY. DECONTROL AUGUST 29, 1978. PARKER

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